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❧ *Poetry* ❧  
*of*  
*NIAGARA*

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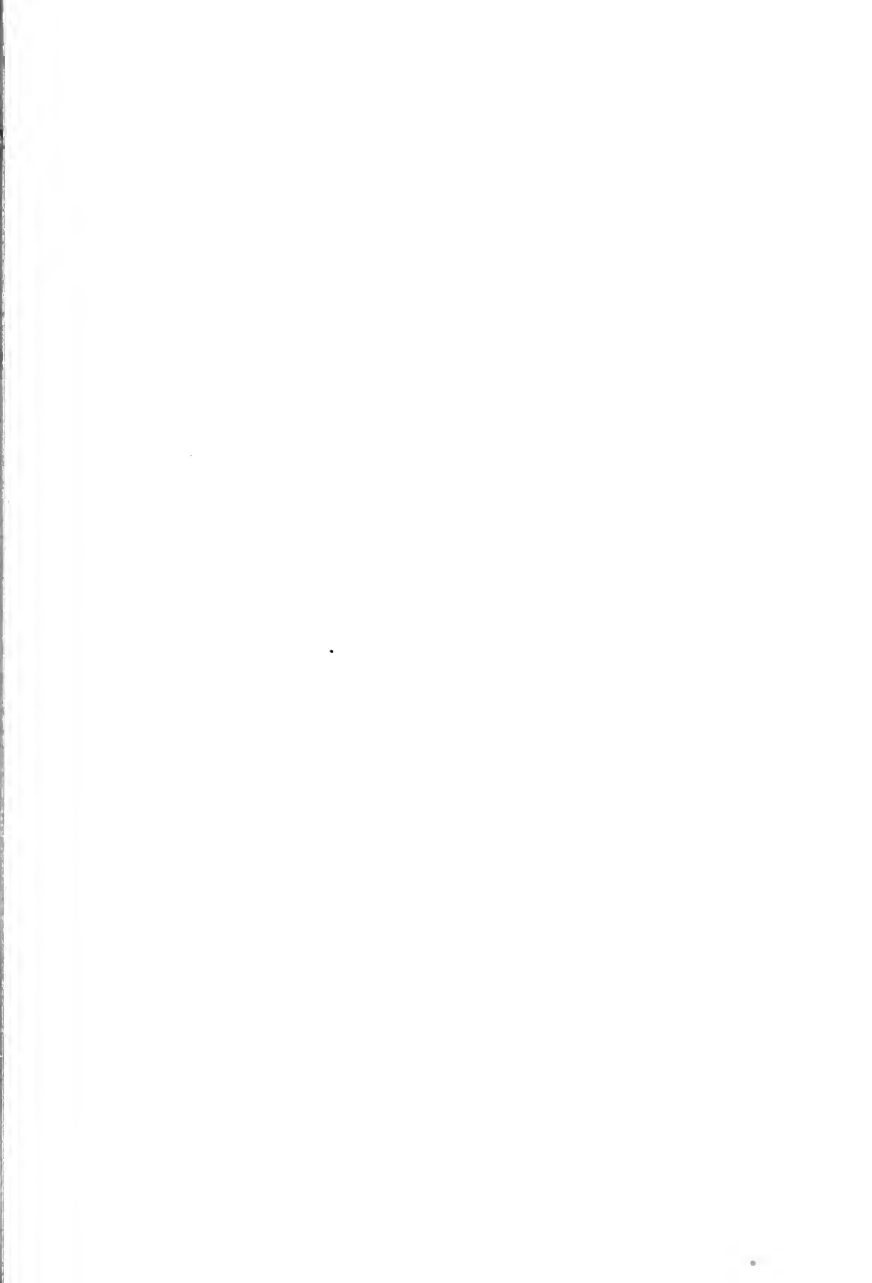
## NIAGARA

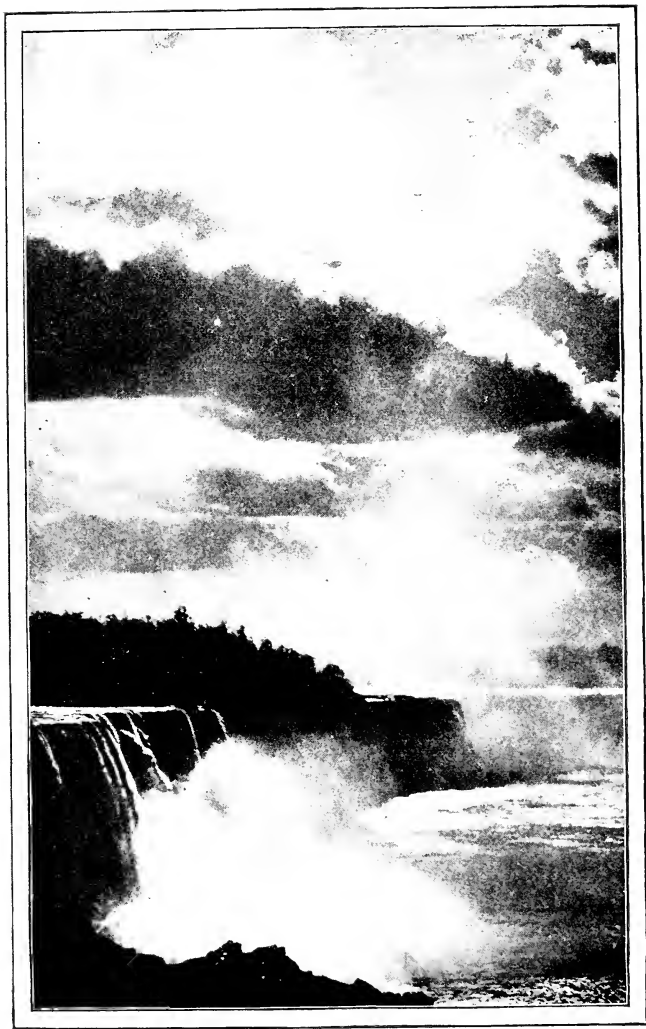
**T**HERE Niagara's starry spray  
Frozen on the cliff appears,  
Like a giant's starting tears.

Moore

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*GENERAL VIEW — MOONLIGHT.*

*Poetry*  
*of*  
*NIAGARA*

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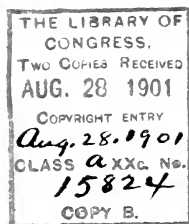
"Niagara! wonder of this western world,  
And half the world beside! hail beauteous queen  
Of cataracts!" An angel who had been  
O'er heaven and earth, spoke thus, his bright  
wings furled,  
And knelt to Nature first, on this wild cliff unseen.

*Maria Brooks*



*Compiled by*  
*Myron T. Pritchard*

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## NIAGARA




HE first effect — the enduring one — of the tremendous spectacle of Niagara was peace — peace of mind, tranquillity, calm recollections of the dead, great thoughts of eternal rest and happiness; nothing of gloom or terror. Niagara was at once stamped upon my heart, an image of beauty, to remain there changeless and indelibly until its pulses cease to beat forever.

Charles Dickens

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THE FALLS OF NIAGARA



HE thoughts are strange that crowd  
into my brain,

While I look upward to thee. It would  
seem

As if God poured thee from his hollow  
hand,

And hung his bow upon thine awful front;  
And spoke in that loud voice, which  
seemed to him

Who dwelt in Patmos for his Saviour's  
sake,

The sound of many waters; and had  
bade

Thy flood to chronicle the ages back,  
And notch His centuries in the eternal  
rocks.

## *Poetry of Niagara*

Deep calleth unto deep. And what are  
we,  
That hear the question of that voice sub-  
lime?  
Oh, what are all the notes that ever rung  
From war's vain trumpet, by thy thunder-  
ing side?  
Yea, what is all the riot man can make  
In this short life, to thy unceasing roar?  
And yet, bold babbler, what art thou to  
Him  
Who drowned a world, and heaped the  
waters far  
Above its loftiest mountains?—a light  
wave,  
That breaks, and whispers of its Maker's  
might.

John Gardner Calkins Brainard

AT NIAGARA



HERE at the chasm's edge behold  
her lean

Trembling as, 'neath the charm,  
A wild bird lifts no wing to 'scape from  
harm;

Her very soul drawn to the glittering  
green,

Smooth, lustrous, awful, lovely curve of  
peril;

While far below the bending sea of beryl  
Thunder and tumult — whence a billowy  
spray

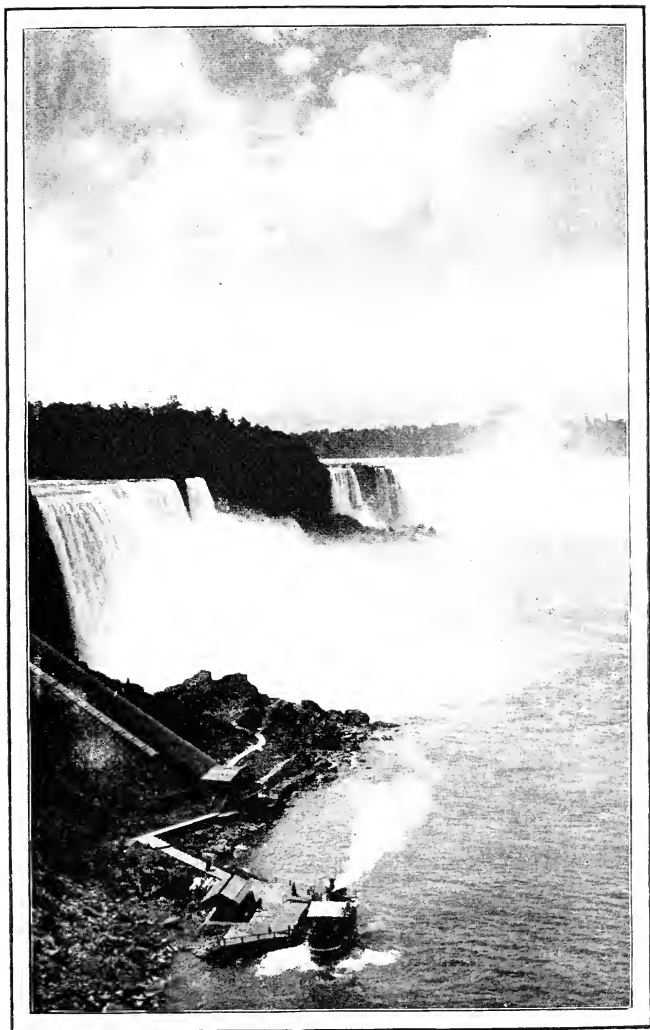
Enclouds the day.

What dream is hers? no dream hath  
wrought that spell!

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

The long waves rise and sink ;  
Pity that virgin soul on passion's brink,  
Confronting Fate — swift, unescapable, —  
Fate, which of nature, is the intent and  
    core,  
And dark and strong as the steep river's  
    pour,  
Cruel as love, and wild as love's first kiss !  
Ah, God ! the abyss !

R. W. Gilder



*GENERAL VIEW FROM NEW BRIDGE.*





NIAGARA



FLOW on forever, in thy glorious  
robe

Of terror and of beauty. Yea, flow on  
Unfathomed and resistless. God hath set  
His rainbow on thy forehead; and the cloud  
Mantled around thy feet. And He doth  
give

Thy voice of thunder power to speak of  
Him

Eternally, — bidding the lip of man  
Keep silence — and upon thy rocky altar  
pour

Incense of awe-struck praise.

Ah! who can dare  
To lift the insect-trump of earthly hope,  
Or love, or sorrow, mid the peal sublime

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Of thy tremendous hymn? Even Ocean  
shrinks

Back from thy brotherhood, and all his  
waves

Retire abashed. For he doth sometimes  
seem

To sleep like a spent labourer, and recall  
His wearied billows from their vexing  
play,

And lull them to a cradle calm; but thou  
With everlasting, undecaying tide,  
Dost rest not, night or day. The morn-  
ing stars,

When first they sang o'er young cre-  
ation's birth,

Heard thy deep anthem; and those  
wrecking fires,

That wait the archangel's signal to dis-  
solve

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

This solid earth, shall find Jehovah's  
name  
Graven, as with a thousand diamond  
spears  
On thine unending volume.  
Every leaf,  
That lifts itself within thy wide domain,  
Doth gather greenness from thy living  
spray,  
Yet tremble at the baptism. Lo!—yon  
birds  
Do boldly venture near, and bathe their  
wing  
Amid thy mist and foam. 'Tis meet for  
them  
To touch thy garment's hem, and lightly  
stir  
The snowy leaflets of thy vapour-wreath,  
For they may sport unharmed amid the  
cloud,

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Or listen at the echoing gate of Heaven,  
Without reproof. But, as for us, it seems  
Scarce lawful, with our broken tones, to  
    speak  
Familiarly of thee. Methinks, to tint  
Thy glorious features with our pencil's  
    point,  
Or woo thee to the tablet of a song,  
Were profanation.

    Thou dost make the soul  
A wondering witness of thy majesty,  
But as it presses with delirious joy  
To pierce thy vestibule, dost chain its step,  
And tame its rapture with the humbling  
    view  
Of its own nothingness, bidding it stand  
In the dread presence of the Invisible,  
As if to answer to its God through thee.

Lydia Huntley Sigourney

NIAGARA FALLS



HERE'S nothing great or bright,  
thou glorious Fall!

Thou mayest not to the fancy's sense re-  
call,

The thunder-riven cloud, the lightning's  
leap,

The stirring of the chambers of the  
deep;

Earth's emerald green, and many tinted  
dyes,

The fleecy whiteness of the upper skies;

The tread of armies thickening as they  
come,

The boom of cannon and the beat of  
drum;

The brow of beauty and the form of  
grace,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

The passion and the prowess of our race;  
The song of Homer in its loftiest hour,  
The unresisted sweep of human power;  
Britannia's trident on the azure sea,  
America's young shout of Liberty!  
Oh! may the waves which madden in  
thy deep  
There spend their rage nor climb the en-  
circling steep;  
And till the conflict of thy surges cease,  
The nations on thy banks repose in peace.

Lord Morpeth

THE NIAGARA FALL



IS the boom of the fall with a heavy  
pour,

Solemn and slow as a thunder cloud,  
Majestic as the vast ocean's roar,  
Through the green trees round its sing-  
ing crowd;

And the light is as green as the emerald  
grass,

Or the wide-leaved plants in the wet mo-  
rass.

It sounds over all, and the rushing storms  
Cannot wrinkle its temples, or wave its  
hair.

It dwells alone in the pride of its form,  
A lonely thing in the populous air.

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

From the hanging cliffs it whirls away,  
All seasons through, all the livelong day.

William Ellery Channing





*PROSPECT POINT — MOONLIGHT.*



NIAGARA



THOUGH the dusk has extinguished  
the green

And the glow of the down-falling silver,  
In my heart I prefer this subdued,  
Cathedral-like gloom on the water:  
When the fancy capriciously wills,  
Nor loves to define or distinguish,  
As a dream which enchants us with fear;  
And scarce throbs the heart unaffrighted.

With a colour and voice of its own  
I behold this wondrous creature  
Move as a living thing.  
And joyous with joy Titanic,  
Its brothers in sandstone are locked,  
Yet from their graves speak to it.  
It sings to them as it moves,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And the hills and uplands re-echo,  
The sunshine kindles its scales,  
And they gleam with opal and sapphire.  
It uplifts its tawny mane,  
With its undulations of silver,  
And tosses through showers of foam,  
Its flanks seamed with shadow and sun-  
shine.

Like the life of man is its course,  
Born far in some cloudy sierra,  
Dimpled and wayward and small,  
O'erleaped by the swerving roebuck;  
But enlarging with mighty growth,  
And wearing wide lakes for its bracelets,  
It moves, the king of streams,  
As man wears the crown of his manhood.  
It shouts to the loving fields,  
Which toss to it flowers and perfume;  
It eddies and winds round its isles,

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

And its kisses thrill them with rapture ;  
Till it fights in its strength and o'er-  
comes

The rocks which would bar its progress.  
The earth hears its cries of rage,  
As it tramples them in its rushing,  
Leaping, exultant above  
And smiting them in derision ;  
Till at length, its life fulfilled,  
Sublime in majestic calmness,  
It submits to death, and falls  
With a beauty it wins in dying,  
Still, wan, prone, till curtains of foam en-  
close it,  
To arise a spirit of mist,  
And return to the Heaven it came from.

As deepens the night, all is changed,  
And the joy of my dream is extinguished :

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

I hear but a measureless prayer,  
As of multitudes wailing in anguish ;  
I see but one fluttering plunge,  
As if angels were falling from Heaven.  
Indistinctly, at times, I behold  
Cuthullin and Ossian's old heroes  
Look at me with eyes sad with tears,  
And a summons to follow their flying,  
Absorbed in wild, eerie rout,  
Of wind-swept and desolate spectres.  
As deepens the night, a clear cry  
At times cleaves the boom of the waters ;  
Comes with it a terrible sense  
Of suffering extreme and forever.  
The beautiful rainbow is dead,  
And gone are the birds that sang through  
it.  
The incense so mounting is now  
A stifling, sulphurous vapour.

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

The abyss is the hell of the lost,  
Hopeless falling to fires everlasting.

Thomas Gold Appleton

NIAGARA



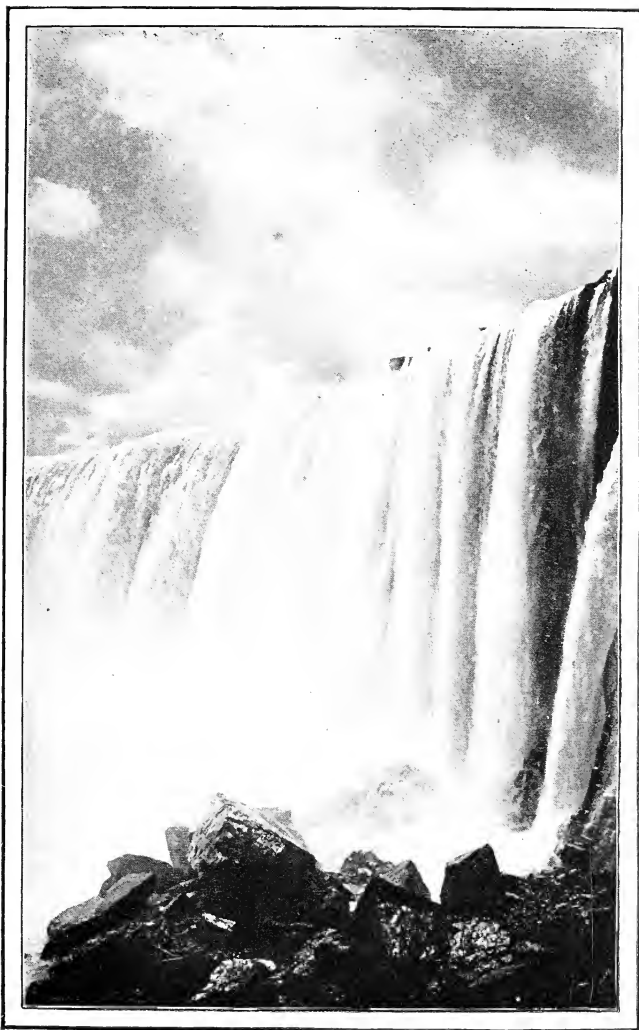
PLENDOR supreme of constant  
majesty,

Of towering passion, overpowering charm,  
At last, mine eyes behold thee as thou  
art —

In all the lightness of thy moving grace ;  
In all the whiteness of thy soaring spray ;  
In all the brightness of thy might !

At last,  
Mine ears drink in thy voice miracu-  
lous,  
O plunging mountain full of thunder-  
songs  
Defiant or triumphant, echoing aye  
Through vasts of day and night !





*HORSE SHOE FALLS FROM BELOW.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

O Shape beyond

All wingèd imagery of magic words  
Most musical, by ancient bards bequeathed  
To spell the hearts of ever-coming men,  
At last, I grasp, I clasp thee ; and my  
    soul,  
Struck speechless in thy Cavern of the  
    Winds,  
Breathlessly burns with sharp, voluptuous  
    ache  
To dash herself against thy torrent breast  
And join the awful Angels of thy fall  
Perpetual on the crags of Agony —  
Victorious Agony of glorious doom !

O perilous bridge 'mid gusts of dazzling  
    pearl,  
Or where a diamond storm enshrouds the  
    way.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Thou seem'st like Life a span 'twixt Day  
and Night ;  
For tho' eternal rainbows crown the rocks,  
Halos of Hope, charmed circles of high  
Faith,  
Commanding entrance through the chasms  
of Doubt,  
To deeps of nobler knowledge and soul-  
strength,  
Yet all this beauty overwhelms the mind  
By clash of contrast with our littleness.

. . . . .

So, Heart of Mine,  
Oh ! Heart of All, stand up and take the  
sun !  
Seize, for 't is thine, thy sovereignty of  
Light !  
Night with her pale Infinitude of Stars,

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Nor Ocean, nor the Mountains, nor e'en  
Thou,  
Niagara, with all thy loveliness,  
Can match, in possibilities of growth  
To Power, to Beauty, to Sublimity,  
That noblest Mystery, the Soul of Man.

Henry Austin

NIAGARA



ROUD swaying pendant of a crystal  
chain,

On fair Columbia's rich and bounteous  
breast,

With beaded lakes that necklace-like re-  
tain

Heaven's stainless blue with golden sun-  
light blest!

What other land can boast a gem so  
bright!

With colors born of sun and driven  
spray —

A brooch of glory, amulet of might,

Where all the irised beauties softly stray.

Ay, more — God's living voice, Niagara,  
thou!

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Proclaiming wide the anthem of the  
free;  
The starry sky the crown upon thy brow,  
Thy ceaseless chant a song of Liberty.  
But this thy birthright, this thy sweetest  
dower,  
Yon arching rainbow — Love still span-  
ning Power.

Wallace Bruce

NIAGARA



REMENDOUS torrent! for an instant hush

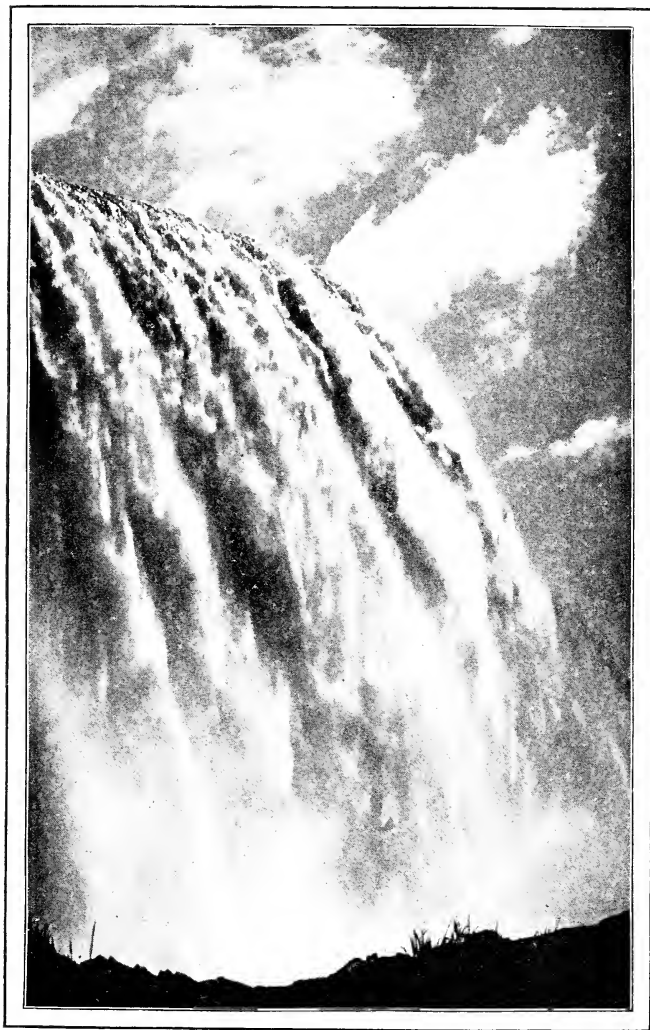
The terrors of thy voice, and cast aside  
Those wide-involving shadows, that my  
eyes

May see the fearful beauty of thy face!  
I am not all unworthy of thy sight;  
For from my very boyhood have I loved,  
Shunning the meaner track of common  
minds,

To look on Nature in her loftier moods.  
At the fierce rushing of the hurricane,  
At the near bursting of the thunderbolt,  
I have been touched with joy; and when  
the sea,

Lashed by the wind, hath rocked my  
bark, and showed





*AMERICAN FALLS FROM BELOW.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Its yawning caves beneath me, I have  
loved

Its dangers and the wrath of elements.  
But never yet the madness of the sea  
Hath moved me as thy grandeur moves  
me now.

Thou flowest on in quiet, till thy waves  
Grow broken midst the rocks ; thy current  
then

Shoots onward like the irresistible course  
Of Destiny. Ah, terribly they rage —  
The hoarse and rapid whirlpools there!  
My brain

Grows wild, my senses wander, as I gaze  
Upon the hurrying waters ; and my  
sight

Vainly would follow, as towards the  
verge

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Sweeps the wide torrent. Waves innu-  
merable

Meet there and madden — waves innu-  
merable

Urge on and overtake the waves before,  
And disappear in thunder and in foam.

They reach, they leap the barrier — the  
abyss

Swallows insatiable the sinking waves.  
A thousand rainbows arch them, and the  
woods

Are deafened with the roar. The violent  
shock

Shatters to vapour the descending sheets.  
A cloudy whirlwind fills the gulf, and  
heaves

The mighty pyramid of circling mist  
To Heaven. The solitary hunter near  
Pauses with terror in the forest shades.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

What seeks thy restless eye? Why are  
not here,  
About the joys of this abyss, the palms —  
Ah, the delicious palms — that on the  
plains  
Of my own native Cuba spring and spread  
Their thickly foliaged summits to the  
sun,  
And, in the breathings of the ocean air,  
Wave soft beneath the heaven's unspotted  
blue?


But no, Niagara — thy forest pines  
Are fitter coronal for thee. The palm,  
The effeminate myrtle, and frail rose may  
grow  
In gardens, and give out their fragrance  
there,  
Unmanning him who breathes it. Thine  
it is

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

To do a nobler office. Generous minds  
Behold thee, and are moved, and learn to  
rise  
Above earth's frivolous pleasures; they  
partake  
Thy grandeur, at the utterance of thy  
name.

Jose Maria Heredia

NIAGARA

HAT wild convulsion in the ages  
past

Shook thee to such immeasurable unrest,  
Oh, mad Niagara? Did the huge crest  
Of some black mountain, splintered by a  
blast

From Heaven down-bolted, leave these  
fissures vast

Whence rush thy waters? Or was ocean  
pressed

From its storm-beaten shores, to dash thy  
breast

And hurl out rage from thee, while Time  
shall last?

Rage on, imperial mystery, that  
thou art;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Chance, in the azoic age, with  
wonders rife,  
At mandate of the gods, from out  
earth's heart,  
In embryo doomed to everlasting  
strife,  
Thou sprang'st defiant, thunder-  
ing to thy part,  
Magnificent and terrible, as Life.

Rage on, for giant raging thou may'st  
show,  
Through veins that interlace the land,  
thy power,  
And with thy foaming passion, bring to  
flower  
The genius of man; may'st writhing  
go  
Like a colossal serpent, to and fro,



## *Poetry of Niagara*

Winding through ribs of steel that massive tower,  
And so imprisoned, strike the zenith hour  
When science shall supremest secret know:  
    I liken thee to soul wherein is pent  
    Divinest madness, that song surging keeps,  
    'Till by unconquerable forces rent,  
    To mighty music it majestic sweeps.  
As the great Odyssey blind Homer sent  
    Crashing sublimely down eternal steeps.

C. E. Whiton-Stone

## NIAGARA FALLS



O Niagara! down the depth profound

Plunges thy broad and mighty gleaming  
flood,

Fed by vast lakes, in symbol union bound.

On Table Rock, now fall'n, in youth I  
stood

Gazing on all the scene in rapt'rous mood.

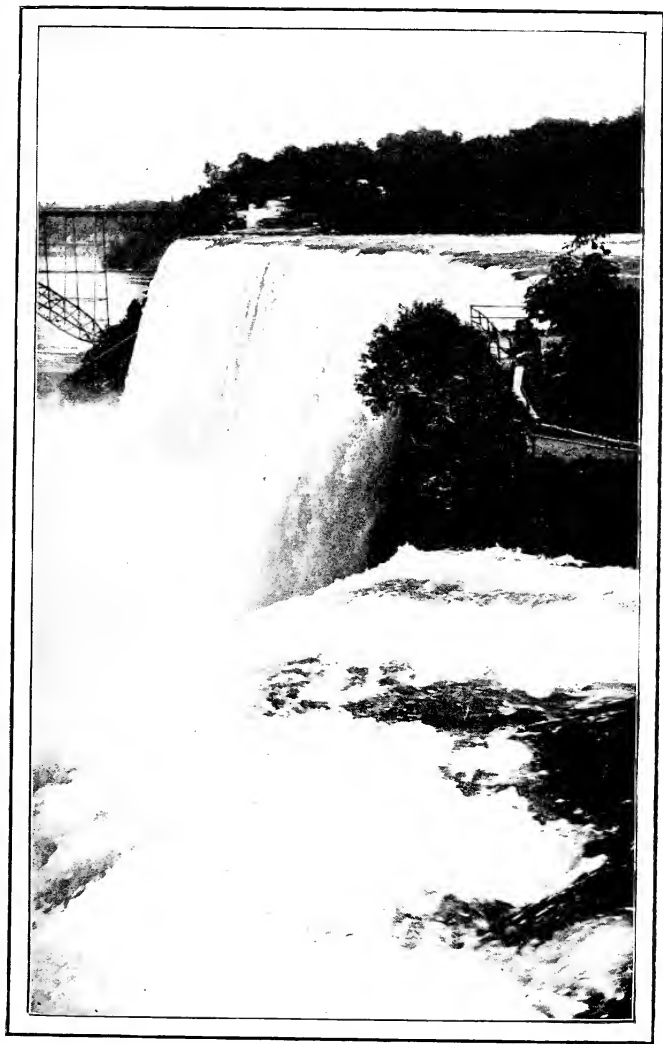
There, at my level, the majestic stream

O'er long curv'd cliff, with ample plenitude,

Begins its stoop in reg'lar bending gleam;

Then falls till shape is lost in foam and  
misty steam.

Perched on thin leaf of overhanging  
rock,



*AMERICAN FALLS FROM GOAT ISLAND.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

I venture to the edge and look below ;  
I see the eddying depth ; and feel the shock,  
The shore all trembling at the earthquake  
    blow.

Ah, what if sudden dizziness should grow,  
As, at Passaic cliff, in her who fell ?  
Or what if shock my foothold ledge o'er-  
    throw,  
And to abyss I sink with loosen'd shell ?  
The solitary fate no tongue could tell.

But though no brother man with me  
    did stand,  
Yet God was there who scooped the basin  
    wide  
And poured the flood out from his hollow  
    hand,  
Yet God was there, whose voice on ev'ry  
    side

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Issued in thunders from the angry tide,  
Yet God was there, the cloud-built arch to  
    rear,  
With mingled hues of beauteous bright-  
    ness dyed,  
Symbol once caused o'er wider flood t'  
    appear,  
Blest pledge of earth's escape from destiny  
    severe.

Stand here, mortal presumptuous! and  
    say —  
While ear is stunn'd with torrent's cease-  
    less roar,  
And solid rocks do tremble with dismay —  
Cannot God's hand the flood of ven-  
    geance pour,  
To sweep the proud, where they will boast  
    no more?

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

---

Let warring tribes this voice of thunder  
hear,  
And hush their rage, lest whirlpool wrath  
devour!  
Christian! the bow of promise shines forth  
clear,  
And thou mayst smile secure, when earth  
shall quake with fear.

William Allen

NIAGARA

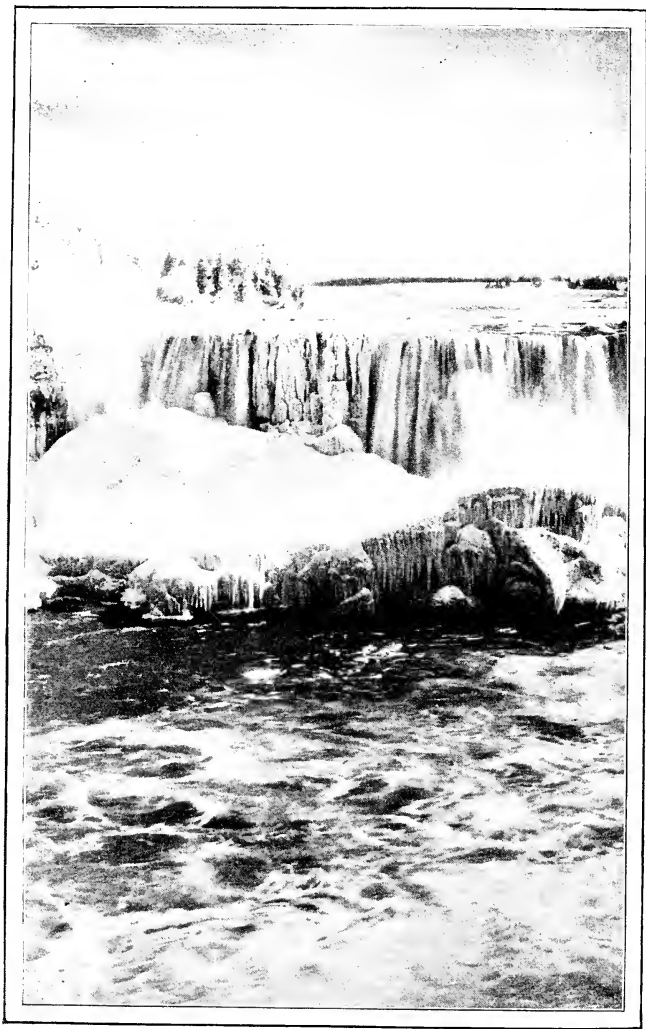


I STOOD within a vision's spell;  
I saw, I heard. The liquid thunder  
Went pouring to its foaming hell,  
And it fell,  
Ever, ever fell,  
Into that invisible abyss that opened under.

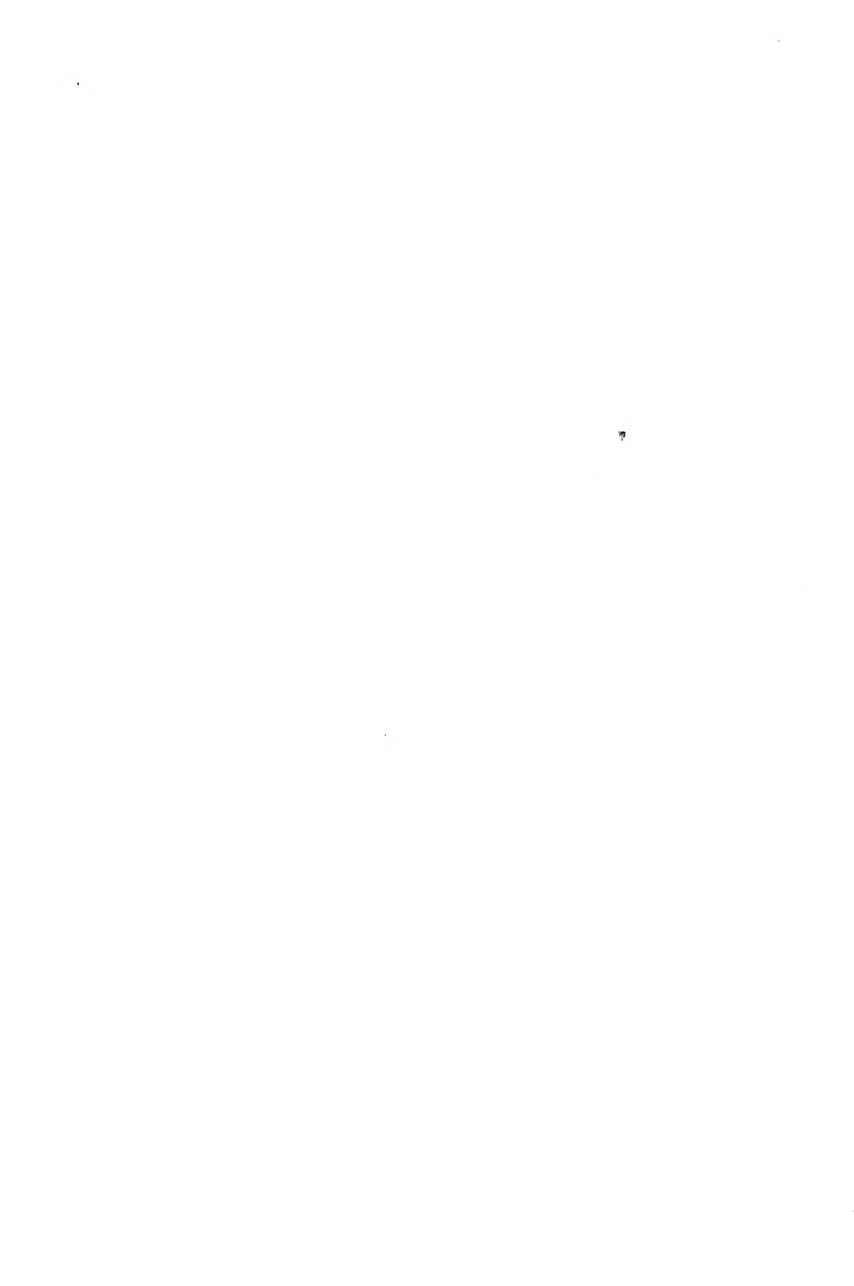
I stood upon a speck of ground;  
Before me fell a stormy ocean.  
I was like a captive bound;  
And around  
A universe of sound  
Troubled the heavens with ever-quivering  
motion.

Down, down forever — down, down forever,





*HORSE SHOE FALLS, CANADA, WINTER.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Something falling, falling, falling,  
Up, up forever—up, up forever,  
    Resting never,  
    Boiling up forever,  
Steam-clouds shot up with thunder-bursts  
    appalling.

A tone that since the birth of man  
    Was never for a moment broken,  
A word that since the world began,  
    And waters ran,  
    Hath spoken still to man—  
Of God and of Eternity hath spoken.

. . . . .

And in that vision, as it passed,  
    Was gathered terror, beauty, power;  
And still, when all has fled, too fast,  
    And I at last  
    Dream of the dreamy past,

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

My heart is full when lingering on that  
hour.

Anonymous

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

### NIAGARA



AS aught like this descended, since  
the fountains

Of the Great Deep broke up, in catar-  
acts hurled,

And climbing lofty hills, eternal moun-  
tains,

Poured wave on wave above a buried  
world?

Yon tides are raging, as when storms  
have striven,

And the vexed seas, awaking from  
their sleep,

Are rough with foam, and Neptune's  
flocks are driven

In myriads o'er the green and azure  
deep.

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Ere yet they fall, mark (where that  
mighty current

Comes like an army from its mountain  
home)

How fiercely yon wild steeds amid the  
torrent,

With their dark flanks, and manes and  
crests of foam,

Speed to their doom — yet in the awful  
centre,

Where the wild waves rush madliest to  
the steep,

Just ere that white unfathomed gulf they  
enter,

Rear back in horror from the headlong  
leap ;

Then, maddening, plunge — a thousand  
more succeeding

## P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a

Sweep onward, troop on troop, again to  
urge

The same fierce flight, as rapid and un-  
heeding —

Again to pause in terror on the verge.

. . . . .

Oft to an eye half closed, as if in solving  
Some mighty, mystic problem — half it  
seems

Like some vast crystal wheel, ever re-  
volving,

Whose motion, earth's — whose axle,  
earth's extremes.

We gaze and gaze, half lost in dreamy  
pleasure,

On all that slow majestic wave reveals,  
While Fancy idly, vainly strives to mea-  
sure

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

How vast the cavern which its veil conceals.

. . . . .

Whence come ye, O wild waters? by  
what scenes

Of Majesty and Beauty have ye flowed,  
In the wide continent that intervenes,  
Ere yet ye mingle in this common road?

The Mountain King, upon his rocky  
throne,

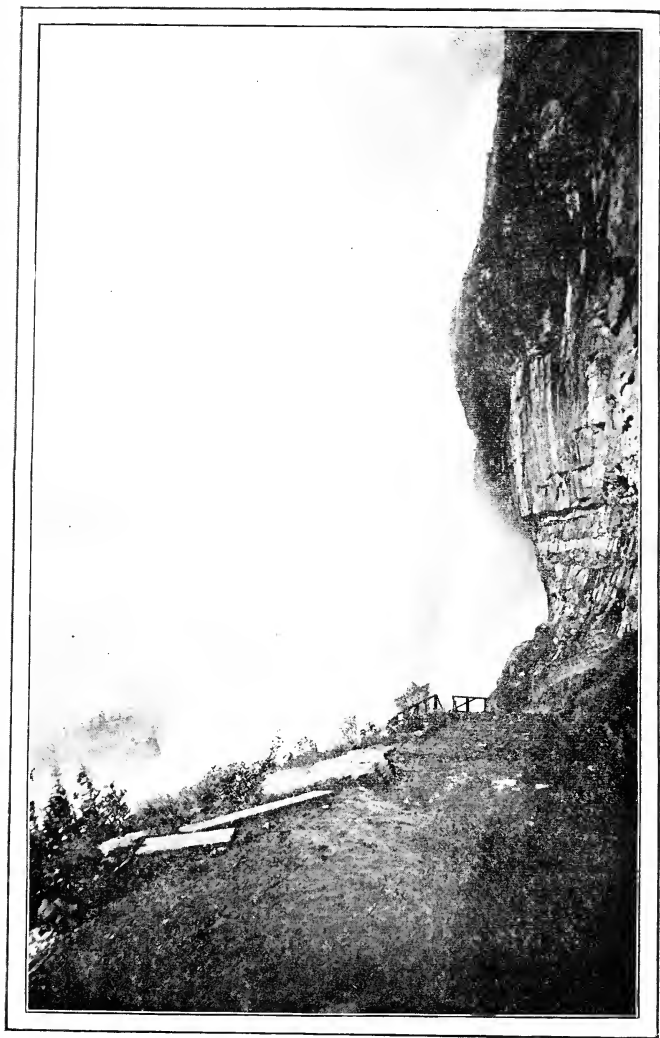
Laves his broad feet amid your rushing  
streams,

And many a vale of loveliness unknown  
Is softly mirrored in their crystal gleams.

They come—from haunts a thousand  
leagues away,

From ancient mounds, with deserts wide  
between,





*CAVE OF THE WINDS.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Cliffs, whose tall summits catch the part-  
ing day,

And prairies blooming in eternal green;

Yet the bright valley, and the flower-lit  
meadow,

And the drear waste of wilderness, all  
past —

Like that strange Life, of which thou art  
the shadow,

Must take the inevitable plunge at last.

Whither we know not — but above the  
wave

A gentle, white-robed spirit sorrowing  
stands,

Type of the rising from that darker grave,

Which waits the wanderer from Life's  
weary lands.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

How long these wondrous forms, these  
colors splendid,

Their glory o'er the wilderness have  
thrown!

How long that mighty anthem has as-  
cended

To Him who wakened its eternal tone!

That everlasting utterance thou shalt  
raise,

A thousand ages ended, still the same,  
When this poor heart, that fain would  
add its praise,

Has mouldered to the nothing whence  
it came.

When the white dwellings of man's busy  
brood,

Now reared in myriads o'er the peo-  
pled plain,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Like snows have vanished, and the an-  
cient wood  
Shall echo to the eagle's shriek again.

And all the restless crowds that now re-  
joice,  
And toil and traffic, in their eager  
moods,  
Shall pass—and nothing save thine awful  
voice  
Shall break the hush of these vast soli-  
tudes.

Henry Howard Brownell

## NIAGARA



DESCRIBE Niagara! Ah, who shall  
dare

Attempt the indescribable, and train  
Thought's fragile wing to skim the heavy  
air,

Wet with the cataract's incessant rain?  
The glowing "muse of fire" invoked in  
vain

By Shakespeare, who shall hope from  
Heaven to win?

And "burning words" alone become the  
strain,

Which to the mind would bring the awful  
din

Where seas in thunder fall, and eddying  
oceans spin.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Long had the savage on thy glorious  
shroud,

Fringed with vast foam-wreaths, gaz'd  
with stoic eye

And deemed that on thy rising rainbow  
cloud

The wings of the Great Spirit hovered  
nigh;

And, as he marked the solemn woods re-  
ply

In echoes to thy rolling thunder tone,

He heard His voice upon the breeze go by,

And his heart bowed — for to the heart  
alone

God speaking through His works, makes  
what he utters known.

But ages passed away — and to the West  
Came Europe's sons to seek for fame or  
gold;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And one, perchance, more daring than the  
rest,  
Lured by the chase or by strange stories  
told  
By Indian guide of oceans downward  
rolled,  
Felt on his throbbing ear thy far-off roar,  
Then sped the mighty wonder to behold,  
Thy voice around him and thy cloud be-  
fore,  
Till breathless — trembling — rapt — he  
trod thy foaming shore.

Upward he gazed to where with furious  
hiss  
The waters spurn the precipice and leap  
Into the vexed and indistinct abyss,  
Where Rage and Tumult ceaseless battle  
keep,



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Filling with roar monotonous and deep,  
The wearied echo;—there he fixed his  
gaze,  
Like one entranced who fears to break  
his sleep,  
Lest the wild vision fade that sleep doth  
raise,  
All thought locked up and chained in  
stern and strange amaze.

Till, slowly rallying from the first sur-  
prise,  
Thought from its magic prison breaks at  
last —  
The gazer from the foam-whirl lifts his  
eyes,  
And scans the whole arena wild and vast;  
From point to point his eager glances cast,  
Take by degrees thy wide circumference in,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And as his speechless wonder slowly  
passed.

Delight succeeded, deep, intense and keen,  
Heart, soul and sense absorbed in that un-  
rivalled scene.

Then through his mind like lightning  
flashed the thought,

Once o'er the Patriarch's soul in Bethel  
thrown,

"Sure, God is with me, and I knew it  
not ;

I see His power in yon majestic zone  
Of mighty waters, and its thunder tone  
Brings to my ear His voice — and deeply  
felt

And almost seen His presence reigns  
alone."

Then meekly by the rock the wanderer  
knelt,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Feeling in awe and love his heart's full  
fountain melt.

And long with shaded eye and bended  
head

He prayed before the Temple's wondrous  
veil,

While from its foot, in ceaseless eddies  
spread,

The mist-cloud rose, like incense, on the  
gale;

And half he deemed that on its pinion  
frail

His prayers, upborne, would blessed ac-  
ceptance know,

He rose with gladdened eye and heart to  
hail

Mercy's fair type and seal, the rainbow's  
glow

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Spanning with calm embrace the troubled  
scene below.

And when the westerling daybeam warned  
him back,

Lingering he stood, as spellbound by the  
strain,

And oft he started on his homeward track,  
And oft returned, one parting glance to  
gain;

And twilight had usurped its fitful reign  
Ere to thy foam his last farewell he bade,  
Then like an arrow, o'er the woody plain,  
Homeward he hurried through the deep-  
ening shade,

Again in dreams to view thy wonders  
round him spread.

And oft alone, and oft with friends, he  
came

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

To scan thy charms and worship at thy  
shrine,

And feel again devotion's hallowed flame  
Blaze in thy presence, fanned with breath  
divine:

And oft from morning until day's decline  
He sat and mused beside thee, for his eye  
Saw nowhere majesty and grace like thine:  
And in his soul thy mighty minstrelsy  
Woke stern and glorious thoughts and  
visions wild and high.

In silence long forgot the wanderer sleeps:  
But still as when thou met'st his startled  
gaze,

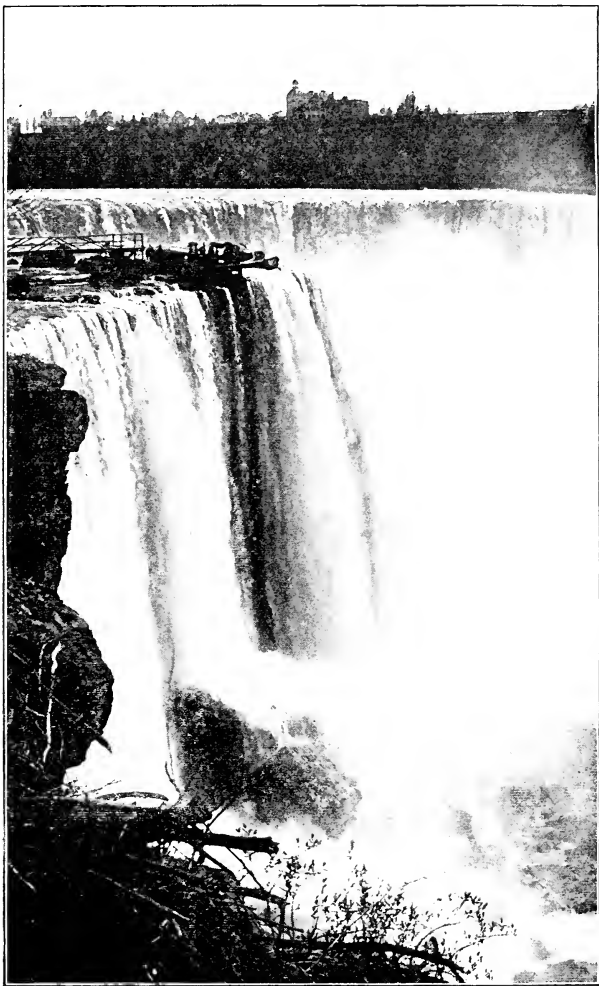
Thy glorious scene the heart in wonder  
steeps

Of him who seeks thee in these later days:  
Sublime in simple grandeur! Art can  
raise

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

No rival to thy throne, nor words convey  
Thine image to the mind, though noblest  
    lays  
Have vied in thy description. Day by day  
Thy roar shall speak of God till nature  
    fade away.

I. H. Clinch




*HORSE SHOE FALLS FROM GOAT ISLAND.*





GOAT ISLAND

EACE and perpetual quiet are  
around,

Upon the erect and dusky file of stems,  
Sustaining yon far roof, expelling sound,  
Through which the sky sparkles (a rain  
of gems

Lost in the forest's depth of shade), the  
sun

At times doth shoot an arrow of pure  
gold,

Flecking majestic trunks with hues of  
dun,

Veining their barks with silver, and be-  
traying

Secret initials tied in true love knots ;  
Of hearts no longer through green alleys  
straying,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

But stifled in the world's distasteful grots.  
The silence is monastic, save in spots  
Where heaves a glimmer of uncertain  
light,  
And rich wild tones enchant the wood-  
land night.

Thomas Gold Appleton

NYMPH OF NIAGARA<sup>1</sup>



NYMPH of Niagara! Sprite of the  
mist!

With a wild magic my brow thou hast  
kissed;

I am thy slave, and my mistress art thou,  
For thy wild kiss of magic is still on my  
brow.

I feel it as first when I knelt before thee,  
With thy emerald robe flowing brightly  
and free,<sup>2</sup>

Fringed with the spray-pearls and float-  
ing in mist,

Thus 't was my brow with wild magic  
you kissed.

<sup>1</sup> Written immediately after leaving the Falls.

<sup>2</sup> The water in the centre of the great fall is intensely green and of gem-like brilliancy.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Thine am I still, and I'll never forget  
The moment the spell on my spirit was  
set;  
Thy chain but a foam-wreath, yet  
stronger by far  
Than the manacle, steel-wrought, for cap-  
tive of war.

For the steel it will rust, and the war will  
be o'er,  
And the manacled captives be free as be-  
fore;  
While the foam-wreath will bind me for-  
ever to thee;  
I love the enslavement and would not be  
free!

Nymph of Niagara! play with the breeze,  
Sport with the fawns 'mid the old forest  
trees;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Blush into rainbows at kiss of the sun,  
From the gleam of his dawn till his bright  
course be run.

I'll not be jealous, for pure is thy sport-  
ing,  
Heaven-born is all that around thee is  
courting;  
Still will I love thee, sweet Sprite of the  
mist,  
As first when my brow with wild magic  
you kissed!

Samuel Lover

NIAGARA ABOVE THE  
CATARACT

**R**IVER of banks and woods and  
waters green,  
With all of beauty to attract the eye,  
Why leaps my heart, as past thy shores  
we fly?  
Art thou not quiet as an infant's  
dream,  
Pure as its thoughts, unruffled as its  
brow  
When circled by its mother's arms in  
sleep,  
While o'er it she doth still her vigil keep?  
Then wherefore leaps my heart so wildly  
now?  
Hark to that roar, deep as the thunder's  
tone,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And in the distance see the sun's last  
ray

Falling on clouds of never-ceasing spray.

In its wild beatings is my heart alone?  
Thou glidest on to meet that battling  
flood,

Fearless as warrior to the field of blood !

Clara J. Moore

NIAGARA BELOW THE  
CATARACT.

**W**ITHIN a temple's towering walls  
I stand —

A temple vast ; the heaven is its dome.  
No corniced crag was hewn by human  
hand,

Nor by it wrought the tracery of foam ;  
The inlaid floor of emerald and pearl

Heaves at the hidden organ's thun-  
derous peal,

While round and up the clouds of in-  
cense curl,

Shrouding the chancel where the bil-  
lows kneel.

Ah ! bow your heads. It is a fitting  
place



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

For solemn thought, for deep and earnest prayer ;  
For here the finger of our God I trace,  
Beneath, above, around me, everywhere ;  
He hollowed out this grand and mighty nave,  
And robed his altar with the ocean wave !

Clara J. Moore

## THE CATARACT ISLE

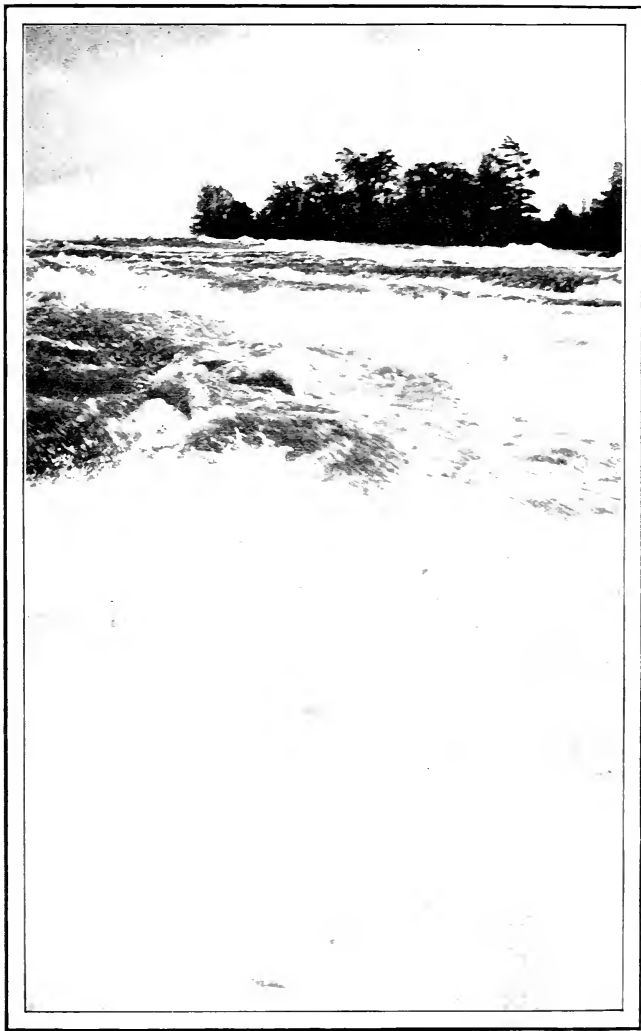


WANDERED through the ancient  
wood

That crowns the cataract isle.  
I heard the roaring of the flood  
And saw its wild, fierce smile.

Through tall tree-tops the sunshine  
flecked  
The huge trunks and the ground ;  
And the pomp of fullest summer decked  
The island all around.

And winding paths led all along  
Where friends and lovers strayed ;  
And voices rose with laugh and song  
From sheltered nooks of shade.



*RAPIDS ABOVE THE FALLS.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Through opening forest vistas whirled  
The rapids' foamy flash,  
As they boiled along and plunged and  
swirled,  
And neared the last long dash.

I crept to the island's outer verge,  
Where the grand, broad river fell —  
Fell sheer down mid foam and surge,  
In a white and blinding hell !

The steady rainbow gayly shone  
Above the precipice ;  
And a deep, low tone of a thunder-groan  
Rolled up from the drear abyss.

And all the day sprang up the spray,  
Where the broad, white sheets were  
poured,  
And fell around in showery play,  
And upward curled and soared.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And all the night those sheets of white  
Gleamed through the spectral mist,  
When o'er the isle the broad moonlight  
The wintry foam-flakes kissed.

Mirrored within thy dreamy thought,  
I see it, feel it all —  
That island with sweet visions fraught,  
That awful waterfall.

With sun-flecked trees, and birds, and  
flowers,  
The Isle of Life is fair :  
But one deep voice thrills through its  
hours,  
One spectral form is there !

A power no mortal can resist,  
Rolling forever on —  
A floating cloud, a shadowy mist,  
Eternal undertone !

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

And through the sunny vistas gleam  
The fate, the solemn smile;  
Life is Niagara's rushing stream,  
Its dreams — that peaceful isle!

C. P. Cranch

## THE LEAP OF NIAGARA

**R**OAR loud, ye winds! ye awful thunders peal!

And instant rouse them from their fatal sleep,

Ere (cruel chance) they sink amid the deep,

Whose secrets Death permits not to reveal.

They wake! O heavens! What now avails their zeal?

Precipitous their maddening course they keep;

And reeling now they make the shuddering leap,

Down-dashed 'mid watery worlds with all their weal!



## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

And thus are they forgot! Not such the  
fate  
Of that immortal maid — enchantress  
sweet —  
Who from Lucadia's rock (provoked by  
Hate)  
Plunged fearless in the waves that round  
it beat.

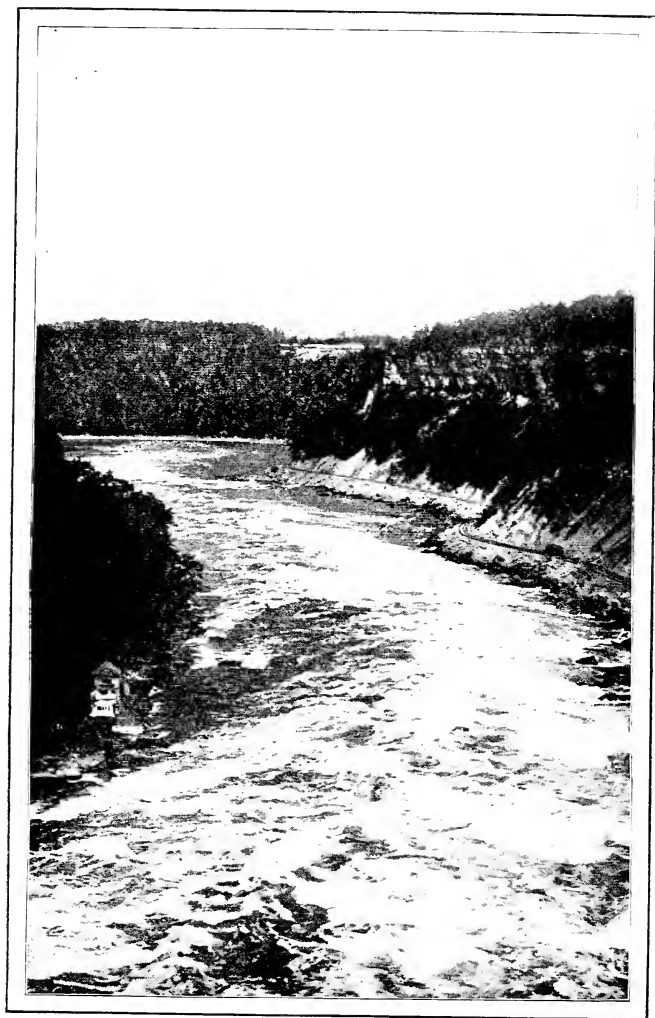
Her name the sighing winds still breathe  
around,  
And Sappho, all the mournful caves re-  
sound.

Henry Pickering

THE WHIRLPOOL OF NIAGARA  
RIVER VIEWED ON A SAB-  
BATH MORNING

“**I**T was a Sabbath of the Soul”;  
I heard the distant cataract roll  
Its choral anthem high,  
Whilst from the forest’s deep repose  
A breath of mingled fragrance rose,  
Like incense to the sky

Its azure dome was o’er my head,  
The green leaves started at my tread,  
As if disturbed in prayer;  
’T was nature’s worship — we alone  
Could jar its harp-strings — not a tone  
But breathed in concert there.



*GREAT WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS – LOOKING  
DOWN.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

I saw, below my verdant seat,  
The swift Niagara at my feet,  
    As in a prison bound ;  
A rocky bed, with graceful bend  
And narrow outlets at each end,  
    Encircled it around.

While the proud rapids seem to pause  
Indignantly to view the cause  
    Of their unwont delay —  
In solemn majesty, they turned,  
Lingering, as if themselves they spurned,  
    In durance thus to stay.

In circling eddies round and round,  
I saw the careless driftwood bound,  
    And watched it on its way,  
Borne gayly on the rapids' crest,  
Till on the water-giant's breast,  
    The passive victim lay.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Within the whirlpool's false embrace,  
Condemned with never-ceasing pace  
    Their aimless course to run,  
Without a hope or goal in view,  
An endless journey to pursue,  
    Beginning, never done.

Yet viewlessly those links confine,  
Brighter than diamond sparks they  
    shine,  
    And merrily they flow,  
Whilst each fair shore stands smiling  
    by,  
And still the dancing waters fly,  
    To music, as they go.

And then I felt like one who dreams,  
And all his airy visions deems  
    Realities of life;  
The senseless logs like men were seen, —

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

A metamorphosis, I ween,  
Not much with truth at strife.

For is not human life a stream,  
Whose rapids (cares and pleasures) seem  
To us but infant's play,  
Till, into passion's current hurled,  
Amid its restless vortex whirled,  
We chase the hours away?

What are the chains the hands have  
wrought?  
The strongest chain is made of thought,  
The poet said of yore;  
Spellbound by habit, thus we see,  
The ocean of eternity,  
Yet seek its bliss no more.

O would we nature's lessons read,  
And draw our pure, exalted creed  
From her celestial lore,

*P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*


All earth would then be hallowed ground,  
In every stream some virtue found  
The spirit's woes to cure.

Susan Hill Todd



## *Poetry of Niagara*

### NIAGARA IN SPRING

H, could I gaze forever on thy face,  
Unwearied still, thou matchless  
waterfall,

Whose twining spells of majesty and grace  
My ardent sense bewilder and enthrall!

In all my moods thy charms' puissant  
sway

Enforce my will their master-spell to own;  
My heart leaps at thy voice — or grave  
or gay —

And every chord is vibrant to thy tone.

So many years I have come back to stand,  
With reverent awe, before thy glorious  
shrine —

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

So close and long thy lineaments I've  
scanned —

It seemed thou should'st grow something  
less divine.

I know thy face, its shifting glooms and  
smiles,

As cloud or sun upon thy bosom lies ;  
Thy wrathful guise, thy witching rain-  
bow wiles

Can wake no more for me the sweet sur-  
prise.

I know thy voice — its terror and its glee  
Have in my ear so oft their changes rung ;  
Nor forest winds nor anthems of the sea  
Speak to my soul with more familiar  
tongue.

My feet have scaled thy storm-scarred  
battlements,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

And pressed the moss most emerald with  
thy tears;  
And still profaned thy lucent caverns,  
whence  
The neophyte comes pale with ghostly  
fears.

Yet, as the more of God the soul perceives,  
And nigher Him is drawn, it worships  
more;  
So, in my heart, its matchless beauty  
leaves  
Constraint, in thine, His grandeur to adore.

Within thy courts I come this vernal day,  
Ere Fashion's chimes invite the thought-  
less throng;  
Almost alone I watch thy curling spray,  
And lose my breath to swell thy ceaseless  
song.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

I mark the flowers upon thy marge that  
    blow,  
Sweet violets and campanule's white bells;  
Their azure shines unblanched, unblushed  
    their snow:  
These timid things feel not, as I, thy  
    spells.

And in thy woods the birds heed not thy  
    roar,  
Where the brown thrush and painted  
    oriole,  
All unabashed, their tides of song out-  
    pour,  
As if thy floods in terror did not roll.

They do not know the flowers and birds  
    around,  
How wonderful, how grand, how dread  
    thou art!

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

But I, transfixed by every sight and  
sound,  
Stand worshipping thy Maker, in my  
heart.

I must go back where tides of commerce  
flow,  
And the dull roar of traffic cleaves the air ;  
But in my heart sweet memories shall  
glow,  
And to my dreams shall summon visions  
fair.

Niagara! thou wilt freshen all my  
thought,  
And cool the breath of fevered noons for  
me!  
My days shall lapse with thy remem-  
brance fraught,  
Thy voices chant my nights' weird lullaby.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*


Great torrent, speed thee to the lake and  
    sea,  
With tireless smoke of spray and thun-  
    d'rous roar ;  
I bless my God for all thy joy to me,  
Though I should see thy marvelous face  
    no more.

W. C. Richards

*P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

AVERY. 1853

I.

LL night long they heard in the  
houses beside the shore,  
Heard, or seemed to hear, through the  
multitudinous roar,  
Out of the hell of the rapids as 't were a  
lost soul's cries,—  
Heard and could not believe; and the  
morning mocked their eyes,  
Showing where wildest and fiercest the  
waters leaped and ran  
Raving round him and past, the visage  
of a man  
Clinging, or seeming to cling, to the trunk  
of a tree that, caught  
Fast in the rocks below, scarce out of the  
surges raught.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Was it a life, could it be, to yon slender  
hope that clung?  
Shrill, above all the tumult, the answer-  
ing terror rung.

### II.

Under the weltering rapids a boat from  
the bridge is drowned,  
Over the rocks the lines of another are  
tangled and wound;  
And the long, fateful hours of the morn-  
ing have wasted soon,  
As it had been in some blessed trance,  
and now it is noon.  
Hurry, now with the raft! But O, build  
it strong and staunch,  
And to the lines and treacherous rocks  
look well as you launch!





*AMERICAN FALLS FROM CANADA.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Over the foamy tops of the waves, and  
their foam-sprent sides,  
Over the hidden reefs, and through the  
embattled tides,  
Onward rushes the raft, with many a  
lurch and leap, —  
Lord! if it strike him loose, from the hold  
he scarce can keep!  
No! through all peril unharmed, it  
reaches him harmless at last,  
And to its proven strength he lashes his  
weakness fast.  
Now, for the shore? But steady, steady,  
my men, and slow;  
Taut, now, the quivering lines; now  
slack; and so, let her go!  
Thronging the shores around stand the  
pitying multitude;  
Wan as his own are their looks, and a  
nightmare seems to brood

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Heavy upon them, and heavy the silence  
hangs on all,  
Save for the rapids' plunge, and the thunder  
of the fall.  
But on a sudden thrills from the people  
still and pale,  
Chorusing his unheard despair, a desperate  
wail :  
Caught on a lurking point of rock, it  
sways and swings,  
Sport of the pitiless waters, the raft to  
which he clings.

### III.

All the long afternoon it idly swings and  
sways :  
And on the shore the crowd lifts up its  
hands and prays :

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Lifts to Heaven and wrings the hands so  
helpless to save,  
Prays for the mercy of God on him whom  
the rock and the wave  
Battle for, fettered betwixt them, and  
who, amidst their strife,  
Struggles to help his helpers, and fights so  
hard for his life,—  
Tugging at rope and at reef, while men  
weep and women swoon.  
Priceless second by second, so wastes the  
afternoon,  
And it is sunset now ; and another boat  
and the last  
Down to him from the bridge through  
the rapids has safely passed.

### IV.

Wild through the crowd comes flying a  
man that nothing can stay,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Maddening against the gate that is locked  
athwart his way.

"No! we keep the bridge for them that  
can help him. You,

Tell us, who are you?" "His brother!"

"God help you both! Pass through."

Wild, with wide arms of imploring, he  
calls aloud to him,

Unto the face of his brother, scarce seen in  
the distance dim;

But in the roar of the rapids his fluttering  
words are lost

As in a wind of autumn the leaves of au-  
tumn are tossed.

And from the bridge he sees his brother  
sever the rope

Holding him to the raft, and rise secure  
in his hope;

Sees all as in a dream the terrible page-  
antry,—

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Populous shores, the woods, the sky, the  
birds flying free;  
Sees, then, the form — that, spent with  
effort and fasting and fear,  
Flings itself feebly and fails of the boat  
that is lying so near —  
Caught in the long-baffled clutch of the  
rapids, and rolled and hurled  
Headlong on the cataract's brink and out  
of the world.

William Dean Howells

NIAGARA

I.

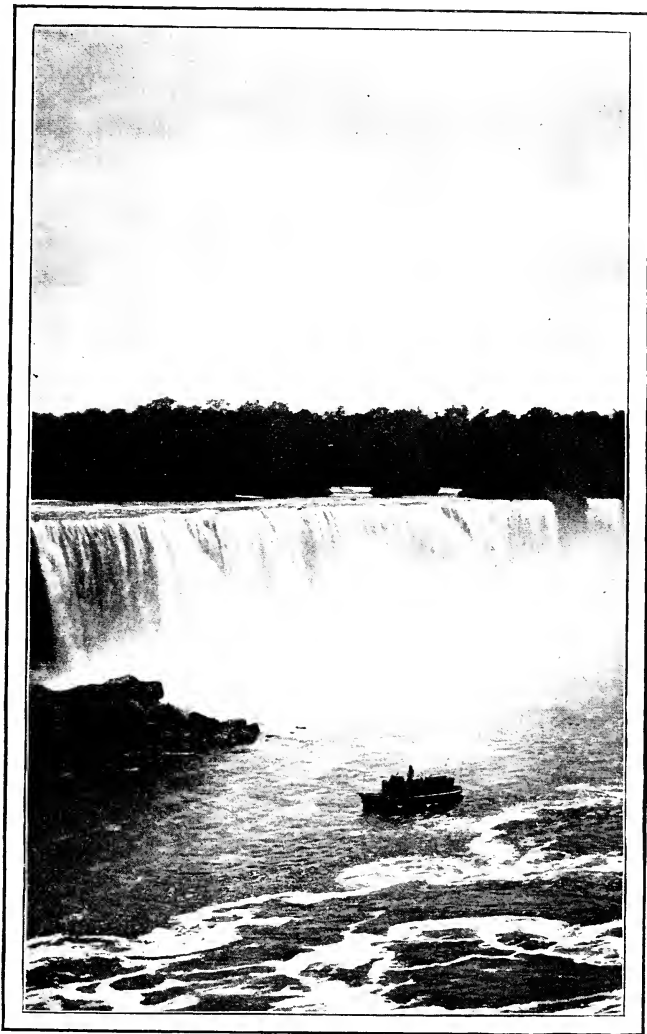


FORMED when the oceans were  
fashioned, when all the world was  
a workshop;

Loud roared the furnace fires, and tall  
leapt the smoke from volcanoes,  
Scooped were round bowls for lakes, and  
grooves for the sliding of rivers,  
Whilst, with a cunning hand, the moun-  
tains were linkèd together.

Then through the daw-dawn, lurid with  
cloud, and rent by forked lightning,  
Stricken by earthquake beneath, above  
by the rattle of thunder,  
Sudden the clamour was pierced by a  
voice, deep-lunged and portentous —





*VIEW FROM CANADA.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Thine, O Niagara, crying: "Now is  
created completed!"

### II.

Millions of cup-like blossoms, brimming  
with dew and with rain-drops,  
Mingle their tributes together to form  
one slow-trickling brooklet;  
Thousands of brooklets and rills, leaping  
down from their home in the uplands,  
Grow to a smooth, blue river, serene, and  
flowing in silence.

Hundreds of smooth, blue rivers, flashing  
afar o'er the prairies,  
Darkening 'neath forests of pine, deep  
drowning the reeds in the marshes,  
Cleaving with noiseless sledge the rocks  
red-cruised with copper,

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Circle at last to one common goal, the  
Mighty Sea-Water.

Lo! to the northward outlying, wide  
glimmers the stretch of the Great Lake,  
White-capped and sprinkled with foam,  
that tumbles its bellowing breakers  
Landward on beaches of sand, and in  
hiding-holes hollow with thunder,  
Landward where plovers frequent, with  
the wolf and the westering bison.

Four such Sea-Waters as this, a chain of  
green land-bounden oceans,  
Pour into one their tides, ever yearning to  
greet the Atlantic,  
Press to one narrow sluice, and proffering  
their tribute of silver,  
Cry as they come: "Receive us, Niagara,  
Father of Waters!"

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Such is the Iroquois god, the symbol of  
might and of plenty,  
Shrine of the untutored brave, subdued  
by an unfathomed longing,  
Seeking in water and wind, still seeking  
in star-glow and lightning,  
Something to kneel to, something to pray  
to, something to worship.

Here, when the world was wreathed with  
the scarlet and gold of October,  
Here, from far-scattered camps, came the  
moccasined tribes of the redman,  
Left in their tent their bows, forgot their  
brawls and dissensions,  
Ringed thee with peaceful fires, and over  
their calumets pondered ;

Chose from their fairest virgins the fair-  
est and purest among them,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Hollowed a birchen canoe, and fashioned  
a seat for the virgin,  
Clothed her in white, and set her adrift to  
whirl to thy bosom,  
Saying: "Receive this our vow, Niagara,  
Father of Waters!"

### III. THE PILGRIM

Pilgrim I too once came, to tender my  
token of homage.  
I too once stood on thy wooded banks,  
my heart filled with wonder,  
I too would render some gift, some tribute  
of song and of harp-strings,  
But 'neath the roll of thy wheels, my  
shepherd's flute was o'ermastered.

Calling, thou seemest to murmur: "Come,  
and I will instruct thee!"

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Willing I ran, like a palmer of old, with  
his pike-staff and wallet,  
Willing I lingered long, to go, but to turn  
on the morrow,  
Coming again and again,—yet only to  
doubt thee more deeply.

Idol I found thee, unfeeling, challenging  
man but to mock him,  
Whispering to one that is weak of voids  
that are vast and almighty,  
Hinting of things heaven-high to one  
not winged like an eagle,  
Telling of changeless parts to a leaflet that  
reddens to perish ;

Ever, as nearer I fared, the mightier, less  
merciful found thee,  
Till, after listening long, I faltered, forlorn  
and disheartened ;

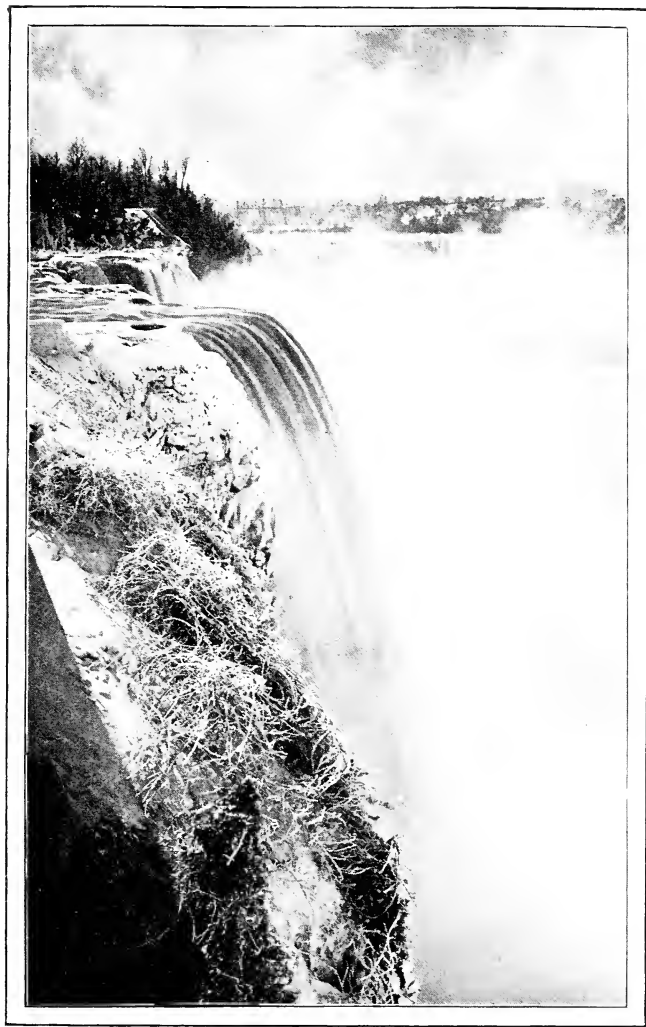
## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Wearied of ceaseless strife, and yearned for  
some peaceful seclusion,  
Where to the chorusing throng both ear  
and eye might be shuttered ;

Hated the turmoil of life, where sounds  
that are sweetest are strangled,  
And into discord clash those martial meas-  
ures, that struggling,  
Should the din of the dismalest fight,  
with quavering echoes,  
Nerve the warrior anew, and fire his soul  
with devotion.

Turning towards far-off fields, I fled, till,  
stopping to listen,  
Only dull undertones told that still thou  
wert calling and calling ;  
Wept, and wished it mid-winter, that,  
muffled in snows of December,





*PROSPECT POINT — WINTER.*



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

All the world might be smothered in  
silence utterly soundless;

Wished like a Druid to hie to some moun-  
tain-top shorn and unsheltered,  
Where, in their wildest flights, the riotous  
winds might be stifled,  
Finding no hollow reed through which to  
pipe their bravuras,  
Finding no trembling twig on which to  
twang their lamentings.

Then, as I crost a meadow-land, dight  
with mallow and daisies,  
Heard the low bumble of bees, and the  
delicate footsteps of robins  
That o'er the crispy leaves of the scrub-  
oak coverts went hopping,  
Suddenly — who shall explain it? — faith  
returned to my bosom;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Suddenly hope revived, the fog from the  
fens was uplifted,  
Lost was the din of life that stormed and  
roared in the roadways,  
Calm were the grassy fields, a lullaby  
purred through the willows.  
And overhead the night was illumined  
with flickering beacons.

### IV.

Often, in later years, allured by thy  
strange fascination,  
Often again have I come, with feet that  
would not turn backward;  
Often knelt at thy feet, and sought with  
a lover's persistence,  
Whether, beneath thy dolorous fugue,  
one promise was whispered.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Hope there was none for me ; august was  
the deep diapason,  
But 't was the moan of the sea, the growl  
of the forest unfeeling,  
Threat of the sulphurous skies that, when  
they are fevered and angry,  
Volley the world with flame and curse  
mankind with their laughter.

### V. THE UPPER RAPIDS

Still, with the wonder of boyhood, I fol-  
low the race of thy Rapids,  
Sirens that dance, and allure to destruc-  
tion — now lurking in shadows,  
Skirting the level stillness of pools and the  
treacherous shallows,  
Smiling and dimple-mouthed, coquetting,  
— now modest, now forward ;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

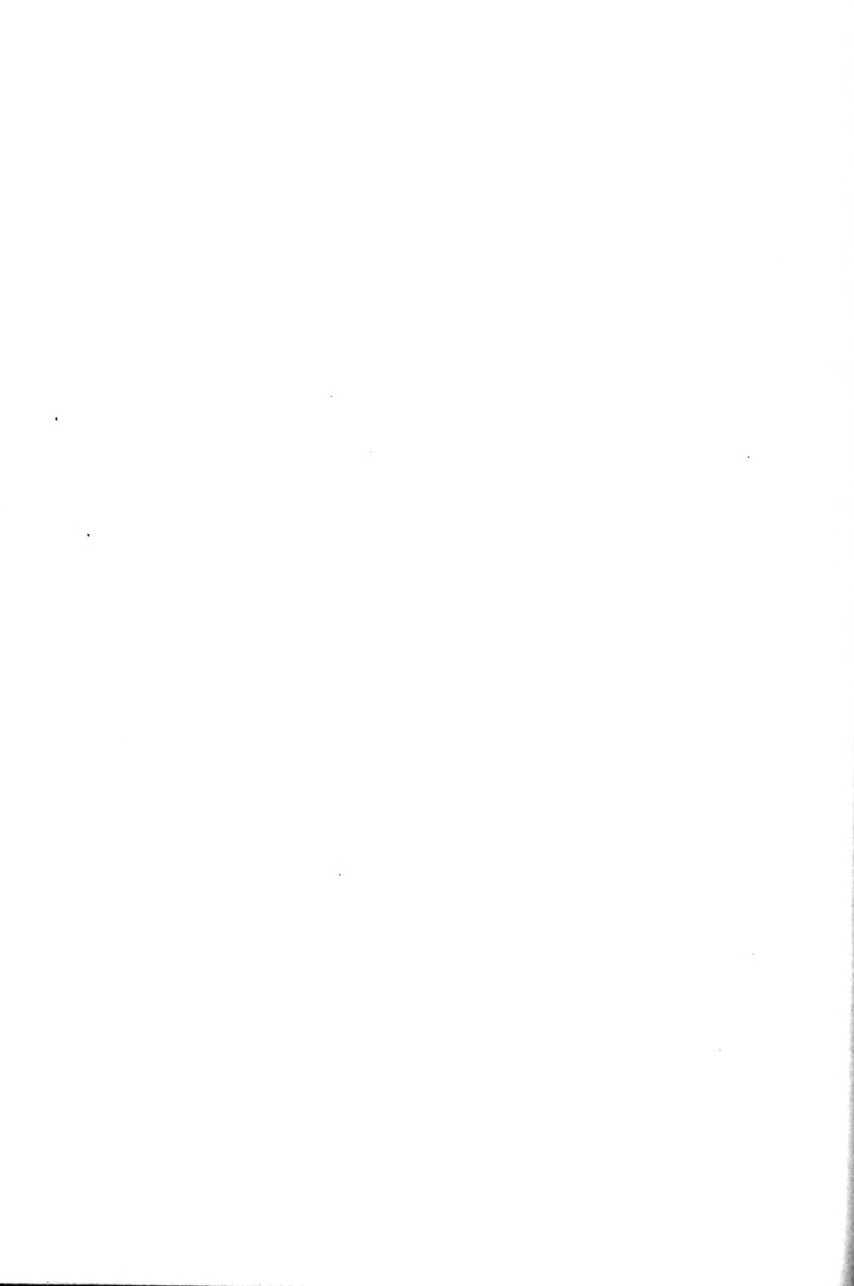
Tenderly chanting, and such the thrall of  
the weird incantation,  
Thirst it awakes in each listener's soul, a  
feverish longing,  
Thoughts all-absorbent, a torment that  
stings and ever increases,  
Burning ambition to push bare-breast to  
thy perilous bosom.

Thus, in some midnight obscure, bent  
down by the storm of temptation  
(So hath the wind, in the beechen wood,  
confided the story),  
Pine-trees, thrusting their way and tramp-  
ling down one another,  
Curious, lean and listen, replying in sobs  
and in whispers;

Till of the secret possessed, which brings  
sure blight to the hearer



*CAVE OF THE WINDS—ROCK OF AGES.*





## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

(So hath the wind, in the beechen wood  
confided the story),

Faltering, they stagger brinkward —  
clutch at the roots of the grasses,  
Cry — a pitiful cry of remorse — and  
plunge down in the darkness.

Art thou, all-merciless then — a fiend,  
ever fierce for new victims?

Was then the red-man right (as yet it  
liveth in legend),

That, ere each twelvemonth circles, still to  
thy shrine is allotted

Blood of one human heart, as sacrifice  
due and demanded?

Butterflies have I followed, that, leaving  
the red-top and clover,

Thinking the wind-harp thy voice, thy  
froth the fresh whiteness of daisies,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Ventured too close, grew giddy, and catching  
cold drops on their pinions,  
Balanced — but vainly — and, falling,  
their scarlet was blotted forever.

### VI. THE CATARACT

Still to thy Fall I come near, as unto  
earth's grandest cathedral,  
Forehead uncovered, hands down, with  
feet that falter beneath me;  
Hearing afar, o'er the rustling grass and  
the rush of the river,  
Chorus triumphant, thy trumpet voice,  
and I tremble with weakness.

Tall above tower and tree looms thy  
steeple builded of sunshine,  
Mystical steeple, white like a cloud, up-  
yearning toward Heaven,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Till into cloud-land it drifts, uprolling in  
hill-tops and headlands,  
Catches the glory of sunset, then pales  
into rose-tint and purple.

Slowly through gothic aisles, I creep to  
the steps of thine altar,  
Halfway forgetting thy presence, though  
still with each step I draw nearer,  
Halfway forgetting thy voice, so far it  
sends fancy awandering,  
Till, with a sudden ascent, full-face thou  
standest before me.

Who, upon tiptoes straining, shall snare  
the fleet course of the comet!  
Who, in bright pigments, shall match  
the luminous sun-god at mid-day!  
Who shall dare picture in words the tur-  
bulent wrath of the tempest!

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Seeing, I can but stand still, with finger  
on lip, and keep silent.

### VII.

Lo! drifting toward us approaches a  
curious tangle of something!

White and untillered it floats, bewitching  
the sight, and appearing

Like to a birchen canoe, a virgin crouched  
pallid within it,

Hastening with martyr zeal to solve the  
unriddled hereafter!

Slower and smoother her flight, until on  
the precipice pausing,

Just for the space of a breath the dread  
of the change seems to thrill her;

Crossing herself, and seeming to shudder,  
She lifts her eyes to Heaven —

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Sudden a mist upwhirls—I see not—but  
know all is over.

Stoop and explore the void where this  
vision of fancy hath vanished!

Torrents of green and blue drench down  
the dizzy escarpment,

Fall into shattered flakes, and merge into  
fury of snow-squalls;

Crisp, like glaciers, they shatter, then  
smoke in the whirl of the vortex.

Stoop and look down! and read, if you  
can, the terrible riddle!

Nay, the secret of death by death's eyes  
alone can be fathomed;

But o'er the mystery finished is fluttered  
the curtain Most Holy,

And on this curtain is set the sign of re-  
demption — a rainbow.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Symbol of hope is this, or merely man's  
hopeful invention?

Thou hast no answer to that, beyond  
this dull undertone moaning:

"Man, of all animate things the noblest,  
most meanly ignoble,

Smiling only to tempt, and spoiling what-  
e'er he embraces!"

Is then thy bow we clasp'd as pledge of a  
promise unfailing,

Naught but a sun-dog ferocious, that,  
mouthing the mariner's noonday,

Kisses with lying lips the soft-sleeping  
clouds of midsummer,

Only to taunt him, lulled by the calm,  
with an ambushed tornado?

Faith in thee have I none! I lift spent  
eyes, and, despairing,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Set my teeth in defiance. Fate, then, the  
father of all things!

I but a victim moth, to be snatched by a  
merciless current,

Dragged by cold eddies down, to be lost  
and forever forgotten!

Why then this pilgrimage here? God  
knows no willful self-seeking

Lent us this restless life; and no faint heart  
or rebellion

Gives us this fear to lie down, and rest in  
the slumberous dreamland! —

Answer, if answer thou hast! Answer,  
Niagara! answer!

Weary with waiting, we climb to the  
hill-tops nearest to Heaven,

Find only floating fogs, and air too  
meagre to nourish;

## *P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a*

Seeking the depths of the sea, we drop  
our plummets and feel them,  
Draw them in empty, or yellowed with  
clay, that melts and tells nothing ;

Forests we thread, wide prairies unfenced,  
and drenchèd morasses,  
Strike, with the fervour of youth, to the  
heart of the tenantless deserts ;  
Turn every boulder, still hoping to find  
beneath them some prophet —  
Find only thistles unsunn'd, green sloth,  
and passionless creatures.

Youth flitted by us, we faint, then sink in  
the ruts of our fathers ;  
Shift as we may with the old beliefs, and  
beat on our bosoms ;  
Seek less and hunger less keenly, still sor-  
row for self and for others,



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Striving, by travail and tears, life's deeper  
meaning to strangle;

Drag from sunset to sunset, too fainting  
to fear for the morrow,  
Suffer, complain of our loads, but catch  
at their withes as they leave us,  
Letting the song-birds escape, perceiving  
not till they've fluttered —  
Bitterly weeping then, as we watch them  
die in the distance.

Struggling, we snatch at straws: call out,  
expecting no answer;  
Pray, but without any faith; grow lag-  
gard and laugh at our anguish;  
Sin, and with wine-cup deadened, scoff at  
the dread of hereafter —  
And, because all seems lost, besiege Death's  
doorway with gladness.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Better we had not been, for what is the  
goal of such striving?

Bubbles that glitter perchance, to burst in  
thin air as they glitter!

Comets that cleave the night, to leave the  
night but the darker!

Smudge that bursts into flame, but only  
in smoke to be smothered!

Out of the gifts of our spring, that only is  
beautiful, counted

With which the day-dawn breaks bud,  
and dies ere the dewdrops have left it;

Smiles there no healthfuller clime, where  
forms that are fair never perish,

But, in a life-giving ether, grow fairer  
with ripening seasons?

Iroquois God, I adore thee, because thou  
art lasting and mighty,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Turn and gaze at thee, going, as on an all-  
marvellous vision,  
Dread thee, thou art so serene — but hate  
thee with hatred most bitter,  
Taunter of all who dabble thy foam, and  
think to discover.

### VIII. THE GORGE

'Neath the abyss lies the valley, a valley  
of darkness — a hades,  
Where the spent stream, as it strives, seeks  
only an end to its anguish ;  
Who shall its fastnesses fathom, or tell  
what wrecks they envelop?  
Here 'neath the tides of time, life's rem-  
nants await resurrection.

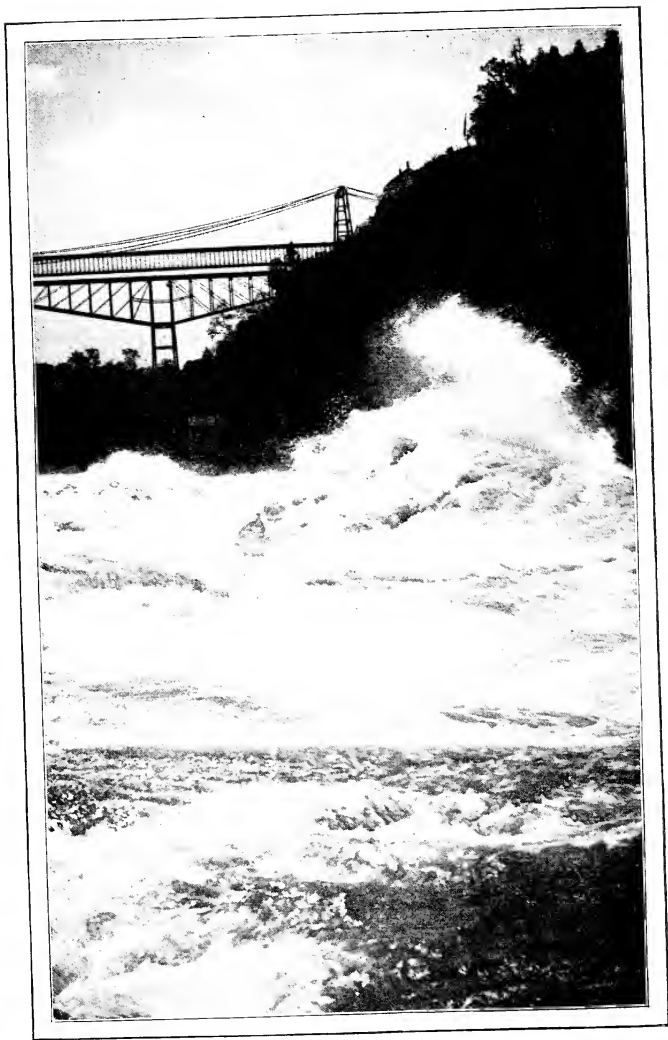
Deep is the way, and weary the way,  
while lofty above it

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Frowns upon either hand, a cliff sheer-  
shouldered or beetling,  
Holding in durance forever the course of  
the will-broken exile,  
Blighting all hope of return, should it  
pant for the flowering pastures.

But from the brinks lean down a few  
slender birches and cedars,  
Dazed by the depth and the gloom of the  
channel resounding beneath them ;  
Here campanulas, too, which lurk wher-  
ever is danger,  
Stoop with a smile of hope, reflecting the  
blue of the heavens.

Fleeter still flies the flood, up-heaving its  
scum at the centre,  
Dragging the tides from the shores to  
leave them a hand-breadth the lower ;



*WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS.*



## P o e t r y o f N i a g a r a

While, like a serpent of yellow, the spume  
crooks down to the Whirlpool,  
Trails with a zigzagging motion down to  
the hideous Whirlpool.

### IX. THE WHIRLPOOL

Here is the end of all things, of all things  
another beginning,

Here the long valley crooks, and the  
flight of the river is broken;

Round is the cavernous pool, and in at  
one side leaps the river,

Headlong it plunges, despairing, and beats  
on the bars of its prison;

Beats, and runs wildly from wall to wall,  
then strives to recover,

Beats on another still, and around the  
circle is carried,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Jostled from shoulder to shoulder, till  
losing its galloping motion,  
Dizzily round it swirls, and is dragged to-  
ward the hideous Whirlpool.

Lofty the rock-walls loom, the narrow  
outlet concealing,  
Loftier still stoop pines, that shut out the  
pity of sunlight;  
Whilst above both a shadow, as if from  
the wings of a vulture,  
Sheds over all below a pall more spectral  
than midnight.

Up from the seething witch-pot arises a  
sulphurous vapour,  
Smoke-clouds slow-winged drift hither  
and hence, revealing, now hiding:  
Whilst from the hollow depths, that hiss  
from some under-world fervour,



## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Bubble, in torrents black, the refuse of  
wreck and corruption.

Round sweeps the horrible maelstrom, and  
into the whirl of its vortex  
Circle a broken boat, an oar-blade, things  
without number;  
Striving, they shove one another, and  
seem to hurry, impatient  
To measure the shadowy will-be, and  
seek from their torment a respite.

Logs that have leapt the Falls and swum  
unseen 'neath the current,  
Here are restored again, and weird is their  
resurrection;  
Here like straws they are snapt, and  
grinding like millstones together,  
Chafing and splintering their mates, they  
wade in their deepening ruins;

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Till, without hope, on tiptoe they rise,  
lips shriveled and speechless,  
Seeing sure fate before them that tightens  
its toils to ensnare them;  
Hollow the hell-hole gapes, and raven-  
ously it receives them—  
All that is left is a sigh, and the echoes of  
that are soon strangled.

### X. CONCLUSION

This, then, can this be the end? and death  
but a blotting forever?  
Turning, a bird was beside me, and strik-  
ing a delicate measure,  
Clearly it whistled— a herald-like strain,  
that challenged a hearer,  
Sung—'t was a broken song—and stop-  
ping, far distant, it fluttered.

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

"Seek within!" was the message, "with-  
out is only reflection;  
Sinless are nature's forms, and therefore  
utterly soulless;  
Sin may debase thee, make thee the ser-  
vant of Fate and of Nature —  
But to thy height arise, and thou art of  
all things creator.

"That alone is august which is gazed  
upon by the noble,  
That alone is gladsome which eyes full  
of gladness discover;  
Night-time is but a name for the dark-  
ness man nurtures within him,  
Storm but a symbol of sin in a soul that  
is stained and unshriven.


"Act but thine own true part, as He who  
created hath purposed,

## *P o e t r y   o f   N i a g a r a*

Then are the waters thine, the winds, all  
forces of nature;  
Thine too the seasons, their fruits, which  
they redden but to surrender,  
Thine too the years, and thine all time —  
everlasting and fearless.”

George Houghton

NIAGARA

ERE speaks the voice of God — let  
man be dumb,

Nor with his vain aspiring hither come.  
That voice impels the hollow-sounding  
floods,  
And like a presence fills the distant woods.

These groaning rocks the Almighty's finger  
piled ;  
For ages here his painted bow has smiled,  
Mocking the changes and the chance of  
time —  
Eternal, beautiful, serene, sublime.

Willis G. Clark

NIAGARA'S EVERLASTING  
VOICE



HOW sweet 't would be, when all the  
air,

In moonlight swims along the river,  
To couch upon the grass and hear  
Niagara's everlasting voice  
Far in the deep blue West away;  
That dreamy and poetic noise  
We mark not in the glare of day —  
Oh, how unlike its torrent-cry  
When o'er the brink the tide is driven,  
As if the vast and sheeted sky  
In thunder fell from Heaven!

Joseph Rodman Drake



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